

[About NCATE
Standards](#)[Institutions/Programs](#)[Research/Resources](#)[Publications](#)[Accreditation
Procedures](#)[Program Reviews](#)[State Partners](#)[Board of Examiners](#)[Policies/Governance](#)[News](#)[Events](#)[PDS Resources](#)

“I’ve seen

accreditation fueled by
a group of students
who come together to
collectively inquire and
question their dean
and professors about
accreditation.”

—Boyce C. Williams

NCATE Vice President
for Institutional
Relations

Professional Accreditation, NCATE, and TEAC

I would like to provide you with updated information on the differences between NCATE accreditation of colleges of education and TEAC's audit of programs within colleges of education.

NCATE has been recognized as a specialized accrediting body since the U. S. Department of Education instituted its recognition function in the mid-1970s. TEAC has now been granted recognition as an accrediting body for teacher education as well. There are important differences-philosophical, structural, and procedural-between the two organizations. We share our perspective below.

What is the purpose and function of specialized accreditation in America?

A. Wise: The Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) defines the characteristics of accreditation as "provid[ing] assurance to the public that accredited institutions and programs meet or exceed established public expectations (standards) of quality." Further, CHEA's Principle 2 in its *Statement on Good Practices and Shared Responsibility in the Creation and Application of Specialized Accreditation Standards* says that "standards are to reflect consideration of public expectations of a profession within the context of an ongoing commitment to quality."¹ The commitment to public accountability is a key function of professional accreditation.

For almost a century, professional accreditation has played a key role in quality assurance in medicine, and more recently, law, psychology, physical therapy, and other established professions. Its success is due-in large part--to an uncompromising expectation for quality in the professional preparation programs through the application of high and rigorous external standards. The established specialized accrediting bodies developed standards and mechanisms to ensure that those standards were instantiated into each institution offering a preparation program.

If one chooses to examine the two accrediting councils in teacher preparation-NCATE and TEAC-differences in philosophy and approach that impact the public accountability function become immediately apparent.

What are the philosophical differences between NCATE and TEAC?

(Regional Accreditation Approach vs. Specialized Professional Accreditation Approach)

A. Wise: One must first understand the essential-and critical-difference

between regional and specialized professional accreditation. Regional accreditation bodies accredit the entire institution. Regional accreditation is a peer review system, led by university and college presidents, in which peers look to see whether the institution as a whole does what it says it is going to do in carrying out its education mission. It is a global look at the overall institution---not an in-depth look at specific programs. On the other hand, the sole reason for specialized professional accreditation is to determine if specific units within the universities-professional schools-protect the public by meeting the profession's and the public's expectations in preparing an individual to practice a profession.

NCATE professional accreditation is characterized by external standards driven by the profession, consumers, and regulators as well as institutions being accredited. NCATE's mission is to determine if the college of education meets public expectations outlined in the external standards developed by the broad spectrum of education stakeholders--including consumers and regulators. The ultimate purpose of a public accreditation system (public in the sense that the profession, consumers, and regulators are an integral part of the process) in teacher preparation is to help ensure that children have access to well prepared and highly qualified teachers.

TEAC has adopted the philosophy of the regional accrediting bodies. It looks to see whether a specific program does what it says it is going to do. TEAC, founded by college presidents, chose to parallel regional accreditation processes rather than professional accreditation processes. Program audits, whether carried out by universities themselves or TEAC, have value to an institution, but they are not designed as a gauge of external standards. Just as college presidents expect professional accreditation for schools of business, dentistry, engineering, nursing, medicine, and other fields, so should they expect professional accreditation of teacher preparation.

What is the difference between accreditation according to professional external standards vs. an institutional audit?

A. Wise: In order to ensure that the expectations of the public and the profession are met, representatives of the profession and members of the public must participate in setting accreditation criteria that are developed in an open, public process.

NCATE sets substantive standards, and does so publicly. It develops drafts of the standards through committees composed of teachers, teacher educators, school specialists, state and local policymakers, and student and public representatives. NCATE places draft standards on its website and also invites comment from all education stakeholders. NCATE's member subject matter organizations draft standards for specific content areas, and these are reviewed and vetted by the field as well. NCATE expects professional standards in each program area to be used in the design and delivery of programs at accredited institutions, thus ensuring consistency in the preparation of teachers across the country. NCATE expects institutions to meet external professional standards as well as state and institutional standards; teams seek

evidence that they are met.

TEAC conducts an audit of programs that an institution submits for review, and expects institutions to meet institutional standards. It also expects institutions to meet state requirements (which is a given for a program to operate). TEAC does not expect institutions to meet the standards established by the profession. TEAC's reviewers examine the institution's goals and determine if the institution provides enough valid evidence that the institution is accomplishing what it said it would.

Determining if selected programs within the institution have met the institution's goals is helpful to the institution but is not sufficient to meet the goals and purpose of professional accreditation. If it were, then many would advocate similar strategies for the accreditation of all other professional programs.

What is the difference between NCATE's comprehensive and TEAC's selective review?

A. Wise: One of the fundamental differences between the two organizations is the entity accredited. NCATE accredits the entire school, college, or department of education. The college of education must meet standards that ensure that candidates know their subject matter and how to teach it so that students learn. The college must also develop an assessment system and ensure that data from it are used for program improvement. In addition, all of an institution's programs that prepare P-12 professional school personnel must undergo external review according to sets of professional standards in the relevant content area. These reviews are used to determine whether the unit is accredited. Individual programs that meet the rigorous standards set by experts in the content areas are given the designation 'Nationally Recognized Program.' These reviews are conducted by specialists in the field who are members of the relevant subject matter/developmental level professional association.

TEAC institutions may select their strongest programs for review-a practice that is not standard in specialized accreditation. In professional accreditation, the entire professional school is usually accredited-not selected individual programs within them. In the established professions, because the entire professional school is accredited, the public has assurance of the competence of the practitioners that graduate from those schools.

How do the membership of NCATE and TEAC drive their respective missions?

A. Wise: NCATE's membership is composed not only of members of the teaching profession and teacher educators, but also those who judge the job they do-consumers and regulators. Because NCATE's membership and governing structure includes all stakeholders--public members and state and local policymakers, as well as organizations of teachers, teacher educators, administrators and other education personnel--NCATE's structure ensures that the council's evaluation of the institutions is external and oriented to the real world of teaching and schools.

NCATE's founding bodies in 1954 included state directors of teacher education and certification, the Council of Chief State School Officers, the National Education Association, the National School Boards Association, and the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education--or the field broadly represented. The 2004 NCATE **coalition of over 30 organizations** of producers, consumers, and regulators is designed to encourage high standards that ensure public accountability.

TEAC's membership, unlike NCATE's, is composed of representatives of teacher preparation institutions or their designees.

What is the difference between NCATE and TEAC policy board structure?

A. Wise: NCATE's policy board structure follows that of accrediting bodies in the established professions. Member associations representing the profession at large appoint individuals to serve on NCATE boards. Individuals are selected from the four 'quadrants' of education stakeholders: teachers, teacher educators, school specialists, and local and state policymakers. In addition, NCATE has at least one public member on each of its policy boards, and a student member on its accreditation decisionmaking board. Once appointed, NCATE's board members are united behind NCATE's mission to determine which schools, colleges, and departments of education meet rigorous professional standards.

In contrast, TEAC was initiated by the Council of Independent Colleges (CIC), a membership organization of the presidents of 400 independent colleges with small enrollments. The CIC mission statement says that the Council is the "*only national organization that focuses solely on providing services directly to independent colleges and universities.*"²

In the early 1990s, CIC formed a Task Force and Steering Committee that developed the plan for TEAC; the first TEAC Board members evolved from this committee.

The chair of the TEAC Board is president emeritus of the Council of Independent Colleges. TEAC operates a self-perpetuating Board; directors are elected at annual meetings by the current directors. The board has 'at least one teacher...and one higher education faculty member in the field of education.'³

What is the composition of the accrediting decisionmaking boards of NCATE and TEAC?

A. Wise: NCATE's accreditation decisionmaking board, the Unit Accreditation Board, is composed of one-third teachers; one-third teacher educators; and the remaining third is split between school specialists and local and state policymakers. They are appointed by the professional associations of which they are members.

In contrast, all members of TEAC's Accreditation Panel (decisionmaking board) are chosen by the TEAC chair, former president of CIC.

Conclusion

In summary, NCATE was created by the profession itself and continues to represent the profession, as is the case with established specialized accrediting bodies. TEAC was established by the Council of Independent Colleges, a membership organization representing the interests of independent college presidents.

NCATE is committed to a two-pronged approach-program improvement in conjunction with public accountability, as it works to ensure the highest quality preparation for tomorrow's teachers.

Endnote

NCATE accredits over 575 colleges of education. In addition, over 100 colleges of education are currently seeking NCATE accreditation. An estimated annual headcount enrollment in these programs is 312,000 full time and 185,000 part-time. NCATE has formal partnerships with 46 states and two jurisdictions designed to strengthen teacher preparation.

¹ Council for Higher Education Accreditation. *Statement on Good Practices and Shared Responsibility in the Creation and Application of Specialized Accreditation Standards*. September 2001. <http://www.chea.org/Research/index.cfm#statements>

² Council for Independent Colleges Mission Statement.
<http://www.cic.org/about/index.asp>

³ Bylaws of the Teacher Education Accreditation Council, p. 6 in *TEAC Operations Policy Manual*.

NCATE

TEAC

What is Accredited NCATE reviews and accredits the entire school, college, or department of education—including ALL programs for the preparation of teachers and school specialists. The public knows that graduates of all teacher preparation programs at the institution meet rigorous standards set by the teaching profession.	What is Accredited TEAC reviews and accredits programs within the school, college, or department of education. The institution may SELECT the education programs it wishes to undergo accreditation review. The public has information about some programs (those programs selected for review).
Membership Over thirty national organizations representing millions of Americans and the diversity of education stakeholders comprise NCATE membership. These organizations include state and local policymakers, teacher educators, teachers, school	Membership TEAC is composed of member higher education institutions. TEAC also has affiliate members who support the organization. These members do not vote. Many of the affiliate members are independent college state associations.

<p>specialists, and public representatives. NCATE's policy boards and committees are drawn from these members to ensure that all stakeholders are represented.</p>	
<p>NCATE Unit Standards</p> <p>NCATE expects the entire school, college, or department of education to meet rigorous external standards set by the profession at large regarding candidate knowledge and skill, assessment systems, ability to teach all children, faculty qualifications, and governance/resources.</p>	<p>TEAC Quality Principles</p> <p>TEAC principles apply to individual programs within the school, college, or department of education. The principles require a review of the quality of evidence presented that the program is meeting the goals it sets for itself.</p>
<p>NCATE Program Standards</p> <p>NCATE also reviews individual programs within the school, college, or department of education to determine whether they meet professional standards set by practicing professionals in the respective fields such as science, mathematics, social studies, etc.</p> <p>NCATE requires programs to meet professional standards as well as state and institutional standards.</p>	<p>TEAC Quality Principles</p> <p>TEAC expects programs that have chosen to be reviewed to provide evidence that the institution has met quality principles including candidate learning, valid assessments of learning, and evidence of quality control within the program. Those programs opting for review are audited to determine that the institution has met its own standards for the program.</p> <p>TEAC requires institutions to meet state standards for curriculum and to have parity with the institution's overall requirements for granting the academic degree. All institutions must meet state standards in order to operate.</p>

[About NCATE](#) | [Standards](#) | [Institutions/Programs](#) | [Research/Resources](#)
[Publications](#) | [Accreditation Procedures](#) | [Program Reviews](#) | [State Partners](#)
[Board of Examiners](#) | [Policies/Governance](#) | [Future Teachers](#) | [FAQs](#) | [Contact Us](#)
[Archives](#) | [Search](#) | [NCATE Home](#)

Copyright © 1997–2004, National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. All rights reserved. NCATE is the professional accrediting organization for schools, colleges, and departments of education in the United States. It is a coalition of over 30 organizations representing teachers, teacher educators, policymakers, and the public.

NCATE—2010 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Suite 500 Washington DC 20036-1023
 phone: (202) 466-7496 | fax: (202) 296-6620 | website: www.ncate.org
ncate@ncate.org

For assistance with this website, contact the [webmaster](#).